

## BOOK REVIEWS

electrocardiography, echocardiography and catheterization with angiography, describing not only their applicability, but on occasion their clear limitations. Each procedure is discussed in terms of the ultimate goal in each patient's care. This section of the text is summarized by an appropriately entitled chapter, "Diagnostic Synthesis," which emphasizes again the need to put all patient data into perspective to allow a reasonable diagnostic yield at an acceptable risk. A section on therapeutics follows. The principles and goals of therapy, rather than many of the particulars are stressed. The remainder of the text offers the more standard review of the major cardiovascular disease entities. It is preceded by a section on the pathophysiology of cardiac lesions in which the author is less concerned with a localized cardiac abnormality than he is with the resultant cardiac performance. The review of major disease entities is not entirely conventional in that the diseases are grouped for discussion to allow their many similarities to be evident. In the discussion of each, the natural history of the disease is emphasized and put into proper perspective with the risk and benefits of diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers to allow rational management.

The philosophy and goals of the text cannot be faulted. It is refreshing and exciting to think through heart disease and its evaluation with this respected cardiologist. Because of the author's intentions and his approach, however, there are clear limitations to the text. The legitimate controversies raging in many areas of modern cardiology are not often appreciated in this individual approach to cardiac disease. As many of the author's opinions are not supported by factual data in the text, nor in the references, it is often difficult to put his views into proper context. In addition, opinions about a particular approach to specific clinical problems are often scanty and occasionally too general to be clinically useful. The subject matter is specific enough, however, that the book is somewhat advanced for those just beginning clinical cardiology. Thus, there are advantages and disadvantages to this as a major cardiology textbook for readers at any level of experience.

While it is difficult to define the group for whom this book is best suited, the author outlines an approach to cardiac patients which is of value to students and clinicians at all levels. Though his management of some problems may not be universally accepted, it is nevertheless reasonable, consistent, and as valid as many of the alternatives. The text neither aims to be, nor is it, encyclopedic. It occasionally lacks adequate factual data support and specificity of recommendations for a specialist in cardiology dealing with a particular problem. The well taught approach to cardiac problem-solving more than compensates for any lack of minute detail and gives hope that there is, indeed, a way to deal with the complexities of modern cardiology.

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**TO YOUR HEALTH—The Pleasures, Problems, and Politics of Alcohol**—Richard S. Shore, MD, Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of California, San Francisco, and psychiatrist in private practice, San Francisco; and John M. Luce, MD, Senior Resident in Internal Medicine, University of Colorado Medical Center, Denver. The Seabury Press, 815 Second Ave., New York City (10017), 1976. 230 pages, \$12.95.

"I trust in the good sense of the American people that they will not bring upon themselves the curse of excessive use of intoxicating liquors to the detriment of

health, morals and social integrity. . . ." With these words Franklin Roosevelt announced the repeal of prohibition. The nature of the lack of "good sense," and other aspects of the history and pharmacology of alcohol are the subject of *To Your Health*.

In early chapters, the authors describe the origins of alcohol and the historical and geographic progression of alcohol use to the American specialty, the highball. In subsequent chapters, the extent of alcoholism with its social and economic implications, the pharmacology of alcohol use and addiction, and the medical complications of alcohol abuse are reviewed. The section on medical management of alcoholism is written for an educated layman, and is too over-simplified to be of use to most medical practitioners.

The two chapters dealing with the disease concept of alcoholism are the most interesting. Acceptance of a disease concept was a critical first step because it moved alcoholics from prisons into various types of treatment facilities. The disease concept has been the foundation for some of the best known and most successful treatment programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous. But the disease concept is inadequate to explain the complexity of alcohol abuse. Clearly genetics, psychological and social factors, and the pharmacology of the drug alcohol interact in the genesis of problem drinking. Treatment is optimally based on an understanding of how these factors operate in a particular patient. Thus different treatment alternatives—group therapy such as used in Alcoholics Anonymous, individual psychotherapy, psychotropic medications and Antabuse® have proved useful for selected patients. Treatment goals such as complete abstinence or responsible drinking must be developed to meet each patient's needs. The challenge now is to define the characteristics of patients which predict optimal treatment methods and goals. Even the role of physicians in treating problem drinkers, needs to be redefined.

The final chapter, "Dealing With Problem Drinking," is disappointing. Before this chapter, the book flows well and the authors give a balanced picture of the pleasures, problems and politics of alcohol. They carefully constructed a case for treatment programs based on a multifactorial model of alcohol drinking. But in the final chapter the authors offer a number of suggestions, mostly unrelated to previous discussion, which include taxation of alcohol, adding vitamins to alcoholic beverages and changing addiction patterns by modifying laws and health insurance. Some of these are clever suggestions but are disconnected from the major theme of the book. The most important issues are addressed briefly at the end of the chapter. These are education to modify attitudes about alcohol use and development of broad-based treatment programs which include prevention, medical treatment and rehabilitation facilities.

This book by Shore and Luce is a useful and pleasant introduction to the subject of alcohol. It is recommended for professionals in the alcohol treatment field and for educated laymen. It does not offer specific information about managing problem drinkers but does provide a perspective in which to better understand the problems and the treatment alternatives. The book is probably too sophisticated for many problem drinkers themselves, who actually might benefit most from it.

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